



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

MORAL INFLUENCE OF DECORATION.

THE proposition having been laid down by an English journal that the interior adornment of a residence must exercise a distinct influence upon the moral tone of its occupants, a clever writer says that without going to this length he is prepared to admit that the owners of a pretty house are likely to be more estimable characters than others less happily situated, and adds that the possession of a beautiful home is likely to encourage the virtue of domesticity, and must tend to lead people to seek their happiness by their own hearths instead of beyond them, outside in the bubble and scuffle of the giddy world.

More than this: the constant observation of their surroundings, if these be raised above mere commonplace to the level of true artistic excellence, must react favorably upon their natures, and develop—possibly insensibly, but surely—both refinement and good taste. The decorator's art, therefore, may be said to have a higher purpose than the mere gratification of the eye, and on this account its daily increasing appreciation may be looked upon as a hopeful sign for the general art-culture of the country. It is indeed surprising how widespread is the demand for esthetic decoration. That which but a few years ago was reserved for princes or rich magnates who had inherited or acquired palatial mansions, may be said to be now within the reach of all. We have gone from one extreme to the other. House decoration is quite the rage. We hear of fabulous prices paid to artistic upholsterers, of commissions given to famous painters for friezes, ceilings and hand-painted tiles.

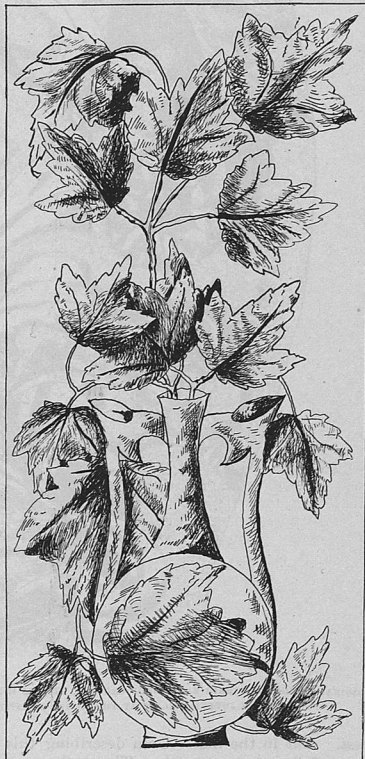
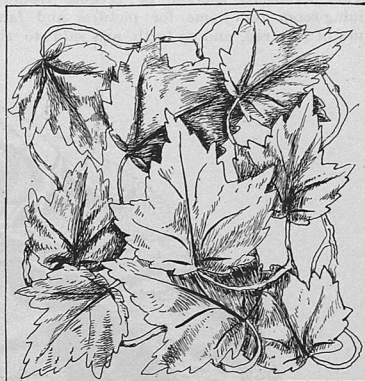
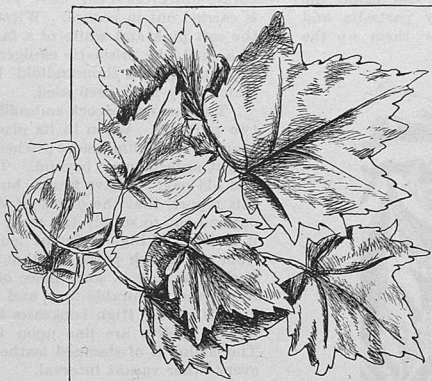
However, this extension of the business of decoration makes it possible for the humblest amongst us, to inhabit a house, whether large or small, in which the eye must always be pleased. But to accomplish this end there are two courses open to us. One method is to surrender ourselves to one or other of the many artists who have made this region of art their special study, or by patient searching after truth to do the decoration without extraneous aid. The former must necessitate an outlay, which, with every conceivable care, cannot fail to be considerable; the latter imperatively demands that the owner should himself be gifted with artistic perception, and have attained a certain practical knowledge of *technique*. Probably the most successful house will be that in which the two plans have been intelligently blended; where the decorator has been entrusted to take the ornamentation to a certain point and no further, leaving the occupier to complete it.

I am thinking as I write of a house wherein these two methods of treatment

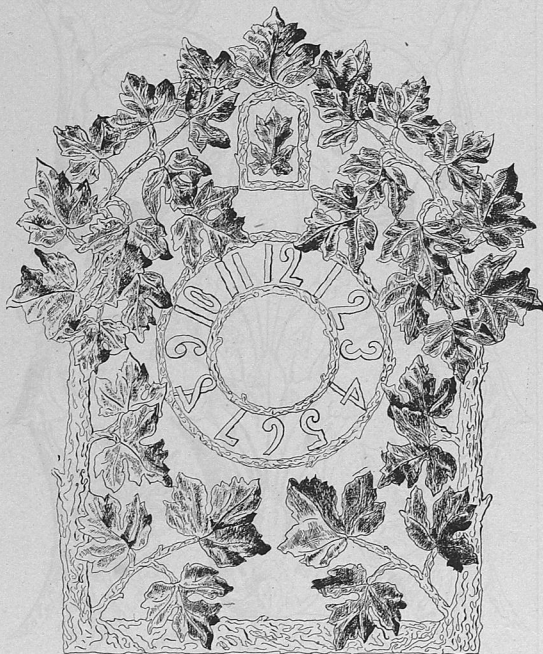
have been put in practice, and the reader shall judge from my description whether the result obtained has been satisfactory or the reverse. In this house the good old rule that the vestibules or approaches

should be subordinate to the principal rooms has been carefully observed. It is right and proper that we should not be introduced too soon to the best parts of the house; the halls, etc., should be 'treated' as a preparation merely to that which is to come; nevertheless the visitor cannot fail to understand when he reaches this particular front door, and notes its color and design, that he is about to enter an artistic house. Passing the threshold, then, he enters a small outer hall of unobtrusive color, and with but little ornament. This is formed by a heavy portiere, and above the rod on which it hangs is a sheet of plate glass. The floor is a tessellated pavement of red and white tiles, and a very charming antique lamp hangs just within the curtains, which, by the way, are a good tone of dull olive-green, with black bands. As a screen from the draught of the door when open this portiere is valuable of course. The inner hall reached, the wall space shows of a sober yellowish drab, with a high dado of red, through which runs a simple line or two of white. These colors carry the eye up the staircase, and end upon the landing in a somewhat different arrangement, of which more directly.

From the hall we pass into the dining-room, which, according to all authorities, should be in a key of rich warm color, either because such is most in accordance with the substantial



ORIGINAL DESIGN FOR MANTEL FACING, BY MISS ELSIE BENTE (AGE 14 YEARS), PUPIL AT THE WOMAN'S INSTITUTE, N. Y.



ORIGINAL DESIGN FOR CUCKOO CLOCK, BY MISS MOLLIE SHEEHAN (AGE 14 YEARS), PUPIL IN THE JUVENILE CLASS AT THE WOMAN'S INSTITUTE OF TECHNICAL DESIGN, N. Y.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

rights performed therein, or because tradition has made the dining-room the home for pictures and family portraits, and hues of rich red, and so forth, are said to show them up the



ORIGINAL DESIGN FOR CHAIR BACK, WOOD CARVING, BY MISS ELLA L. COX (AGE 15 YEARS), PUPIL IN THE JUVENILE CLASS AT THE WOMAN'S INSTITUTE, NEW YORK.

best. But in the house I am describing this principle has been successfully set on one side. The walls are a dark drab, with a high dado of mauve and drab in alternate bands, and a frieze of sober-hued stamped leather. The tones of the wall colors are not servilely followed in the furniture, and the latter shows sufficient variety to avoid monotony, while harmony is yet preserved throughout. The interest hangs naturally about three principal points: First, at the fireplace, over which is a mantelpiece of oak and walnut, with ebonized moldings, in the centre of which is fixed a life sized marble medallion; next, where opposite to this stands a high oaken sideboard with mirror, and above this a shelf for china, and above that again a curved recess, covered with stamped leather; and thirdly, where hangs the curtain that divides the dining-room from the small antechamber or reception-room beyond.

This curtain, which is the work of the lady of the house, is quite perfect as a work of art. In color it is a dark bluish green, and it is crossed by broad bands of pale yellow and black velvet, beneath which are embroidered at intervals circular devices of peacock's feathers. These, with the rare blue china, the Salviata vases, the choice brass work and bronzes, and other *objets d'art* sprinkled about, serve as points of positive color, to brighten up the room. Thus a judicious recognition of a well-known principle in decoration, namely, that neutral hues—tertiaries and quaternaries as they are termed—should generally predominate, being employed in broad masses, while the primaries, the sparkling positive colors, are used sparingly, coming out therefore, as high lights, and giving point and brilliancy to the general effect. Ac-

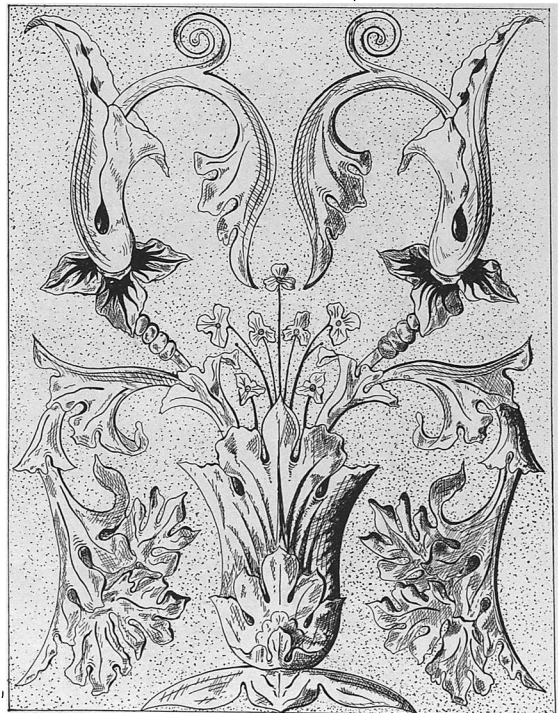
curate observers must have noticed how carefully this principle is carried out in nature. Witness the bloom on a ripe peach, the soft pink and white of a fair girl's cheek, the delicate lining of a shell, the prismatic effulgence of flowers, where the brighter pigments gain a thousandfold by the judicious economy with which they have been used.

This heavy peacock-embroidered portiere is made to serve two purposes. When in its place it serves to close in the dining-room to snug dimensions; when drawn back it frames in the bright antechamber beyond. This room is all stamped leather and old oak. I have heard, but will not vouch for the truth of this report, that the owner of this house bought an old church out-and-out to supply the work necessary for this room. Certain it is that the high wainscot looks suspiciously like the panelling from old church pews, but that is neither here nor there. What is clear is, that in some place or other the oak has weathered to its present admirable tone, and the gain in a decorative point of view is great. High bookcases hide great part of the walls, and on the shelves are line upon line of decorously-bound books. The ceiling is of stamped leather, and the same material fills up every other vacant interval.

At the end of the room is a bright window garden, which shuts out effectually the mews and other horrors which render hideous the back parts of many of the best houses in town. This room is small, but well suited to its requirements—as a place of assemblage in winter time and when the party is small. The *coup de theatre* is charming when the portiere is drawn back and the dining-room is revealed, supplying in its dazzling white table perfectly appointed below the hanging lamp, a centre of artistic interest, and a delectation of the eye by no means unimportant in its effects upon the spirits of the diner.

So much for the ground floor. Let us now go upstairs. The staircase I have described already; but upon the first landing there is some change in the arrangements of the wall color. Here, on each side of the landing, the dado is higher and of a dark gray green; above it is the drab, continued from below; and let into the wall is an arched recess of deep dark red, and in this recess stands a fine blue jar. From this landing a door opens into the boudoir, which is the gem of the house. Seen from the foot of the stairs, if its door be open, it sparkles like a choice brilliant, and there is no disappointment on a nearer approach. It is full of quaint furniture, glittering with gilding, adorned with many colors. The tones (if any) which may be said to prevail are pale blue and sage green, and the color of the woodwork is mostly black ebonized oak. There are two different kinds of paper, one russet and the other stone gray; the dado is of the first, the wall space of the second; both of the same pattern of autumnal tinted leaves.

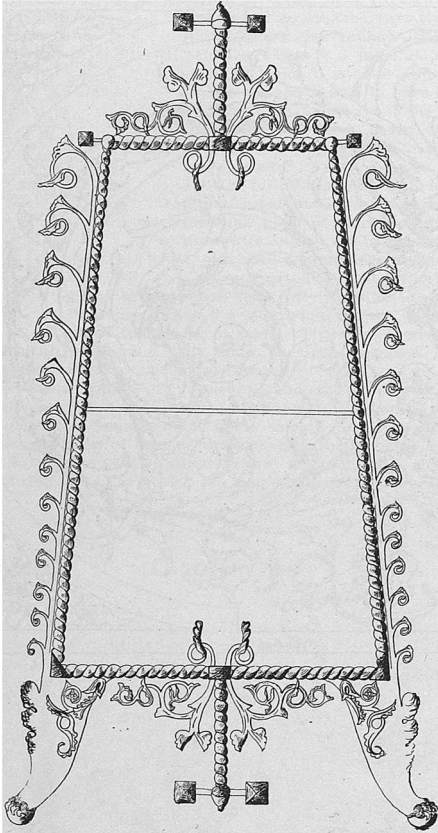
The frieze is blue, the ceiling a pale lemon yellow, decorated



ORIGINAL DESIGN FOR CABINET DOOR, IN WOOD CARVING, BY MISS HEDWIG KURTZ (AGE 14 YEARS), PUPIL IN THE JUVENILE CLASS AT THE WOMAN'S INSTITUTE, N. Y.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

with apples, leaves and nestling birds; but the color is varied—there is blue china in abundance, a gorgeous Japanese screen, bearing gilt birds with long tails on stone-colored ground. Moorish carpets on the floor remarkable for their rich patterns, in which yellow and stony purples predominate. At the far end, as



ORIGINAL DESIGN FOR EASEL, BY MISS LILLIAN LANGDON (AGE 14 YEARS), PUPIL IN THE JUVENILE CLASS AT THE WOMAN'S INSTITUTE OF TECHNICAL DESIGN, N. Y.

the finishing touches to the room, is a window of well executed stained glass, in which the general effect is heightened by gilding the lead work of the panes. This window is in a raised recess, a step higher than the rest of the room, and within it a seat runs round just below the sill.

From the boudoir to the drawing-room, and this description is finished. Here, in the chief apartment of the house, the dec-

oration is the richest and most pretentious, the furniture most varied and costly. It is Venetian in character; strong, deep-colored maroon velvet and gorgeous tapestry are prevailing characteristics. But the walls are a sober tone of dark green, and the window curtains are dark, relieved by broad bands of light blue. The ceiling is highly decorated with the leaves and fruit of the pomegranate. A purist might style the ornamentation of this room as somewhat sombre—the doors are black, and so is the mantleshef, and the frames of the circular mirrors; still the effect is good, and the prevailing hues bring out wonderfully the choice plaques and many pictures hanging upon the walls.

SCHEME FOR A WHITE ROOM.

FEW householders have had courage to allow a white room to be set apart in their domiciles, yet white gives a sense of cleanliness, of spaciousness and of refinement that would be a startling and welcome novelty. Let's see if we can't make one: The apartment shall be of goodly size, and be well lighted by windows in the day time and by gas at night; the walls shall be papered or painted in an ivory white, warmed with a little yellow to take off the chill, and on this shall be wrought a faint pattern, floral or conventional, in pale gray and gold; the fireplaces and mantels may be of marble, which so seldom looks well in the ordinary living room, because it is like a snow drift in an upholstery shop, or they may be composed of light wood and white porcelain tile; the mirrors must be of modest size, of beveled glass, and the vases and other bric-a-brac must exhibit no more pronounced color than sky blue, rose pink, yellow and light green; a floor strewn with skins of the polar bear and the coyote, underlaid with a large rug of the highest obtainable pattern or a carpet of pale mauve but slightly figured; a frieze of vines filled with shining white blossoms; doors, window casings and ceilings of white enamelled wood, picked out with gold; windows shielded by white silk curtains, looped back, and either unstarched laces or the soft folds of Madras; white plush portieres, silk lined and delicately patterned; furniture of white wood, solid but graceful, and upholstered in flowered white silk; piano—and such an one is at this moment being made in New York—of wood enamelled white, with gold beading and moldings, and short keys of oak brown, pearl gray, or any other color than dead black; chandeliers, polished brass, with shades of opal glass or white porcelain, and trimmings of nickel or silver; andirons of brass also; a small bookcase of white wood, containing choice volumes in white cloth, white leather and vellum; no registers, no stoves, no steam radiators, no "tidies," nor other ugly things about; for wall ornament, one or two paintings executed in a high key and set in silver frames, the rest etchings and water colors, with mats of cream colored paper and frames of white and gold. "Dost like the picture?"

The only drawback to the plan is that every person in a dark suit would be as much out of harmony as a crow in a snow field, but ladies in summer garb, gentlemen in gray, and children in the light tints that become them best, would look better in the clearing and purifying reflections from the walls than they do with sombre backgrounds. Besides, the day will perhaps come when fashion will decree that we shed our mournful habiliments and dress again in color. Then company and room will make a charming picture.

